

LITTLE "GROWLING BIRD" IN WINDEGO LAND



One day, Aundak, the Crow, and Little Growling Bird went out in the woods, quite a distance from the wigwam. Aundak showed him the Cave Rocks, and a big pine tree that had a large piece of its bark torn off and queer criss-cross marks scratched on the white wood.

"That's Big Bear's blaze!" said Aundak. "What does it mean?" asked Little Growling bird.



Aundak then explained to him that when he was a little tiny papoose Big Bear had been chosen to be his godfather, because he was the totem, or animal friend, of the little boy's family. To protect him from harm, Big Bear had then gone out into the bush and scratched his blaze on all the large trees around the wigwam, in a circle about a mile across.



Now, this blaze on the trees was a notice to all the beasts in Windigo Land that the woods within this circle was "Refuge Ground," and every one was forbidden to harm Little Growling Bird, or to kill any of the weaker animals or birds within its limits. (Of course, the notice was in the animals' sign language, so they could all read it easily.) "If any one disobeys the order," said Aundak, "Big Bear will punish him; for he is the Boss in Windigo Land!" Just then Wahboos, the Rabbit, came hopping along in a big hurry.



"Where's Big Bear?" asked Wahboos, all out of breath. "I've a complaint to make to the Boss! What's the trouble?" Aundak inquired.

"I was taking a sun bath on the big sand heap, inside the Refuge Ground," Wahboos replied, "when Shingoes, the Weasel, sprang at me and grabbed me by the ear! I thought I was safe inside the circle, but Shingoes and Gray Wolf are villains; they do not respect the law. I ran into a briar patch," said Wahboos, "and soon scraped him off, but just look at my ear!"



Little Growling Bird and Aundak, the Crow, looked at his ear and saw the marks where Shingoes, the Weasel, had bitten it. Wahboos was so nervous that his nose quivered.

"I think I can smell him yet. I'll bet he's sneaking around here somewhere," said Wahboos.

(Now, ever since that time, when Wahboos, the Rabbit, thinks he smells danger, his nose trembles.)



Little Growling Bird called out for Big Bear, and then Aundak flew up on a rock and called as loud as he could; but Big Bear was sleeping in a cave in the Cave Rocks and could not hear their voices.

"Caw! Caw!" said Aundak, after he had shouted himself hoarse. "He can't hear anything. His ears are full of fur. Stamp on the ground, Little Growling Bird, maybe he'll feel the jar and wake up!" So the little boy stamped real hard on the ground.



Wahboos looked on admiringly. "Is that the way to call Big Bear?" he asked. "I'm mighty strong in my hind legs. Let me try it, too!" So Wahboos picked out a hard piece of ground and thumped and thumped with his big hind feet, until Big Bear, who was not very far away, felt the vibration and came out of his cave to see what it was all about. They all spoke at once and told him how Shingoes, the Weasel, had broken the law.



Now, when Shingoes saw Big Bear coming, he knew there was trouble in store for him, so he sneaked into a hole in the rock and curled himself up for a good sleep. Aundak soon found out where he was; but Big Bear couldn't reach him, so he took a large stone and placed it in front of the hole so close that Weasel couldn't possibly squeeze through. "That'll keep him safe for awhile," said Big Bear; so—



They went back to the wigwam and told No-Komis all about it. "I'll attend to Shingoes next week, when I have more time," said Big Bear. "Besides, I left my dinner pail in the cave and I'm hungry!" So they all sat down at the table and No-Komis brought them something nice for supper.

Now, the reason why Wahboos, the Rabbit, always thumps the ground with his feet, when he is frightened, is because he thinks he can call up a friend who will come and take his part.